Headline

NPOESS Program to Incorporate LANDSAT Sensor Capability

Synopsis

Landsat satellites have gathered moderate resolution multispectral images of the Earth's land surface for 30 years. An August 13th White House decision directed NOAA, NASA, and the US Geological Survey (USGS) to plan to incorporate a new Landsat imager onboard NPOESS as an operational mission, providing an opportunity for NPOESS to help meet this continuing national need.

Article

I am pleased to announce that the White House has issued a policy statement directing the government to make plans to incorporate the next-generation of land imaging instruments on the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS). The Departments of Commerce and Interior and NASA have agreed on a plan for the transition of the Landsat mission to NPOESS.

Landsat satellites have been a national asset for more than 30 years, gathering multispectral images of the Earth's land surface and coastal regions for land use research, economic forecasting, disaster recovery and relief, and studying human impact on the environment. A principal source of global, medium-resolution, multispectral data, Landsat images are used by more than 70 governments, universities, and private institutions. There are two Landsat satellites in orbit today; Landsat 5 has been in operations 20 years and Landsat 7 for about five years. The US Geological Survey in Sioux Falls, North Dakota operates the satellites. The satellites use a combination of on-board recorders, real-time links to foreign and US stations, and TDRSS relay satellites to return approximately 400 images per day.

The White House plan envisions Landsat's legacy continuing as an operational mission aboard NPOESS satellites, taking advantage of NPOESS' designed-in weight and power margins, and the SafetyNet™ data retrieval system. NASA will develop the sensor and we will integrate it on NPOESS. USGS will provide daily command loads to the NPOESS ground station to tell the sensor when to store collected images on its own on-board solid-state recorder. The direction called for this capability to be on the first NPOESS, called C-1, in late 2009.

This business opportunity enables us to expand our leadership in the development of systems that provide reliable environmental data for military and civilian uses. I'd like to congratulate Fred Ricker, Brian Chappel, Leo Andreoli and the NPOESS and Business Development teams for their work in making this decision a reality. A job well done!

Please provide the NPOESS team your full support as we work together with the NPOESS Integrated Program Office to execute this expanded mission.

Wes Bush
President.